

**Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**  
**Full Council Meeting Minutes**  
February 6, 2020

**Members Present**

Dan Martinez, Chair  
Scott Lindbloom  
Dave Cheesman  
Danita Applewhite  
John Gutierrez  
Melissa Wojtak  
Paula Seanez  
Judith Castro  
Ana Nunez  
Carol Carr  
Kristen Mackey

**Members Absent**

Jill Pleasant  
Kathy McDonald  
Sheri Carparelli

**Staff Present**

Lindsey Powers

**Guests Present**

Brian Dulude  
Brian Mickelson  
David Steinmetz

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**Call to Order and Introductions**

Dan Martinez, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm in the RSA Videoconference Room, 515 N. 51st Avenue, Phoenix, and in the RSA Video Conference Rooms located in Tucson, Flagstaff, and Yuma, AZ.

**Approval of November 7, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Melissa Wojtak moved to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2019 SRC Full Council meeting. Scott Lindbloom seconded the motion. The council approved the meeting minutes by unanimous voice vote.

**SRC Chairperson's Report**

Dan Martinez stated that some council members such as John Gutierrez had been members for several years and inquired regarding members' appointment process. John Gutierrez stated that his and Paula Seanez's appointments were required appointments under the council's bylaws. Carol Carr stated that a previous SRC Chair, Chuck Tiller,



had recommended that she join the council and her appointment went through the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions easily. Paula Seanez stated that she had been interviewed prior to being appointed to the council. John Gutierrez stated that council appointments could take time. Dave Cheesman stated that he was appointed after approximately six months after applying. Dan Martinez stated his understanding that the appointment process could be slow and was typically slower during the Legislative session. Danita Applewhite suggested the council members continue to perform outreach to recruit new members to the council. Dan Martinez agreed that individuals could participate on committees while waiting to be appointed to the council. He noted that committee members could vote at the committee level but could not vote at Full Council meetings. John Gutierrez inquired whether an individual could participate on a committee if the individual was not a council member. Dan Martinez stated members of the community could participate on committees, although most committee members should be council members. Kristen Mackey stated that she could request the Department of Economic Security Legislative Services check on the status of appointments. Danita Applewhite inquired whether a non-council member could be a Chair of a committee. Dan Martinez stated that all committee Chairs had to be council members. Mr. Martinez stated that he encouraged all council members to continue with their recruitment efforts and to reach out to their contacts.

### **RSA Administrator's Report**

Kristen Mackey stated the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Rules were in process, and were with the DES Policy Planning Administration, and would not likely be finalized until June. Kristen Mackey stated Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) continued to serve individuals in Priority 2 and 3 within 30 days and had seen an increase in individuals categorized in those priorities. Ms. Mackey stated RSA anticipated suspending the Order of Selection (OOS) Wait List, although the agency would remain in an OOS. She noted that the suspension of the Wait List would be the first time since March 2009. Kristen Mackey stated RSA continued to experience a relatively high turnover rates for Counselors, Rehabilitation Technicians, and Rehabilitation Instructors, and was working with DES Central HR to identify how to minimize that gap. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was fully staffed with supervisors, and the staff at the 51<sup>st</sup> office had moved to the 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue office.

Kristen Mackey stated the SRC reviewed the Customer Service questions that were developed, and RSA was working on a distribution process to capture approximately 95% for open and closed cases. Kristen Mackey stated some of the achievements from the Program Year 2019, which now followed the State Fiscal Year (SFY) of July 1- June 30 were the reduction of the VR waitlist from 1,507 to 224, and an increase in the number of Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE)s by 3.7%. She noted RSA also increased the number of job placements by 10.6%, increased the number of exits with employment by 7.3% and reduced the number of days from application to eligibility by 16.6 days. Kristen Mackey stated the agency increased the number of dual enrolled clients VR/ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) by 124% and increased the number of dual enrolled VR/DDD clients placed in competitive integrated employment by 500%. She added that RSA developed, tested, and implemented cross-divisional Standard Work between VR and DDD, which helped when communicating with the clients and the families. Kristen Mackey stated the Quality Assurance and Integrity



Administration began random sampling of open and closed cases, and noted the cases were 90% accurate. Ms. Mackey stated RSA implemented Job Readiness Training (JRT) at 8 offices, due to feedback from vendors indicating that clients required additional training on skills such as resume development and interview skills. Dan Martinez inquired whether the Capstone Project with Phoenix College was part of the JRT training. Kristen Mackey stated the JRT had a specific curriculum, although the Capstone Project training could be provided in correlation to the JRT training. Paula Seanez inquired regarding the curriculum for the JRT training. Kristen Mackey stated she could share the curriculum, which was from Iowa VR, and was a 4-week training. Kristen Mackey stated RSA had 2 Employment Specialists that were working as part of the JRT team, which resulted in 55 placements. Scott Lindbloom inquired whether RSA could work with the DMV to provide training for individuals to obtain CDLs. Kristen Mackey stated DES could explore conversation with the DMV or the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) regarding CDL training in Show Low.

Kristen Mackey stated for the 2020 program year, RSA would continue to develop Standard Work for VR processes such as Eligibility and Order of Selection and when to use Status 20 (or the job ready status). She noted that RSA would also provide Customized Employment training and would have pilot programs in Tucson, Sierra Vista, Nogales and Benson to serve 6 clients with significant disabilities. Kristen Mackey stated RSA would work with Sonoran UCEDD, WINTAC, the Youth Technical Assistance and the Technical Assistance for Juvenile and Corrections to provide the pilot program. Ms. Mackey stated RSA would also improve customer service to external and internal stakeholders. Paula Seanez inquired whether RSA was considering the feedback from the customer service surveys for improving customer service to stakeholders. Kristen Mackey stated RSA did review the results from the prior customer satisfaction surveys and was using that information as a baseline for improvements. Danita Applewhite stated she was pleased to see the number of individuals on the OOS Wait List decreasing and inquired whether the Employment Specialists would work with Independent Living (IL) programs. Kristen Mackey stated RSA provided rehabilitation instructional services, which tended to be IL building skills. Danita Applewhite inquired whether RSA performed outreach to the Veterans Affairs (VA) also. Kristen Mackey stated the Employment Specialists worked closely with the VA and the workforce centers. Kristen Mackey stated that as of November 2019, RSA had increased the number of job placements to 1050 and increased the number of exits with employment to 675. She noted the number of dual enrolled VR/DDD job placements was 29, the number of clients who exited without a job from Status 20 was reduced to 20. She added the Pre-Employment Transition Services provided directly by VR staff was increased by 39%. Kristen Mackey stated that Dr. Cara Christ was still the Interim DES Director. She added that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan had been released for public comment and the deadline to submit the plan was February 30<sup>th</sup>, although the accepted due date was April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Kristen Mackey stated for the last quarter, there were 11 complaints to RSA, that revolved around eligibility determination, whether the client was successfully employed, VR staff saying the client was not participating, and VR services were no longer needed. Kristen Mackey stated there were 9 remediations, which revolved around the nature and scope of the IPE (such as employment goals or the services were not provided in an IPE) and determination for closure. She noted there were 3 disputes that were settled prior



to Fair Hearings, 3 formal mediations, and 1 that was going onto a Fair Hearing. Kristen Mackey stated there were 23 Fair Hearings, in which 13 were submitted by a vexatious litigator, whom was not a current client. Kristen Mackey stated of the remaining Fair Hearings, 4 were in favor of the individual and 3 were in favor of the department. John Gutierrez stated the VR website indicated a vacant supervisor position at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street office. Kristen Mackey stated her understanding that position was filled, and the online information could be slow to update, although she would check on that position. John Gutierrez inquired regarding the number of clients that were VR and DDD clients. Kristen Mackey stated that about 3% of clients were dual enrolled as VR/DDD clients, with the current coding. She noted RSA was working to improve the coding, so the data would match. John Gutierrez stated he was pleased to hear about the suspension of the OOS Wait List. Mr. Gutierrez stated that he continued to hear that counselors expressed that they did not receive enough training. Kristen Mackey stated the agency was investigating online courses through the VR Development Group, which counselors could take and obtain CRC credits. She added that RSA was also working with the Office of Professional Development to update the Core courses to staff. John Gutierrez suggested the Policy Unit implement a method for counselors to submit questions regarding policies. Paula Seanez stated she would be interested in learning about the online portal and inquired whether RSA would continue to work with the University of Arizona for training. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was supporting staff in taking 4 courses through UofA and had requested additional training on courses such as Ethics, as well as courses throughout the year. Scott Lindbloom inquired whether SRC members could participate in that training. Kristen Mackey stated that training would not be available to non-VR staff. Dan Martinez stated he would be interested in hearing about the Federal RSA Strategic Planning at the next Full Council meeting. Kristen Mackey stated that she anticipated receiving a draft report from the RSA Federal audit and would share that with the council.

## **Committee Reports**

### ***Program Review Committee***

Ana Nunez stated the Program Review Committee reviewed the Post-Secondary Education/Training Policy and the IEP Policy and the committee would meet to discuss the next topics to review. Ana Nunez stated the committee was open to suggestions from the council and was also waiting for any new policies requiring review. Dan Martinez suggested the committee consider connecting with the Workforce Investment Board regarding areas for collaboration. Judith Castro stated she was a member of the local WIOA Workforce Board and was able to provide feedback to the council.

### ***Employment and Community Partnerships Committee***

Carol Carr stated the Employment and Community Partnerships Committee continued to work on development of the Arizona Employer Toolkit and the Table of Contents had been distributed to the council for review previously. Carol Carr stated she started embedding links with information and her goal was to distribute the Toolkit for feedback and be ready for publication by June. Carol Carr stated the Toolkit format was based on the Ohio Employer Toolkit and she was considering adding information like the Texas Employer Toolkit as well. Ms. Carr stated that she met with Untapped Arizona, which



was looking for funding for the organization. Carol Carr stated the bulk of the work was performed by the committee members, although the committee invited members of the community to attend meetings and offer updates as well.

### ***Membership Committee***

Danita Applewhite inquired whether the Membership Committee could invite members from the community to attend a meeting where breakfast would be provided and discuss membership strategies. Dan Martinez stated that he would be willing to explore options for a meeting with community members.

### **Membership Organization Updates**

#### ***SILC***

Scott Lindbloom stated that Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) members would attend an upcoming conference. Danita Applewhite stated SILC finished the ASU Morrison Institute survey and she would share the results with the council. Dr. Applewhite stated there was a collaborative effort between DES and SILC and there would be an Emergency Preparedness meeting on March 10, and more information could be found on the website <https://azsilc.org/>. Scott Lindbloom stated SILC was working with the Navajo and Apache Counties and would hold meetings in Kingman and Bullhead City. He noted his goal was for all Centers for Independent Living (CIL)s participate in the Emergency Preparedness training.

#### ***American Indian VR Projects***

Paula Seanez stated there were 86 American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Service Programs (AIVRS) across the country, in which 6 tribes were funded in Arizona. She noted the AIVRS programs continued to work with NAU/IHD American Indian VR Technical Assistance and Training Center and Northwest Indian College/TVR Institute for training, professional development and technical assistance. Paula Seanez stated the grants would end on September 30, 2020 and Federal RSA was currently seeking input to develop the new Request for Proposals for those services. Ms. Seanez stated the Northern Arizona University, Institute for Human Development would host an Evidence for Success Disability Conference June 7-9 at We-Ko-Pa Resort in Scottsdale/Fountain Hills and was accepting presentation proposals. Paula Seanez stated the mid-year CANAR Conference would be June 15-18 in Niagara Falls and the Seneca Nation would be the hosting tribe. She noted the Navajo OSERS was currently fully staffed except for the Rehabilitation Services Technician position in Kayenta.

Paula Seanez stated Federal RSA sent out the Historical Perspective – 100 Years of Vocational Rehabilitation with the following:

This year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first federally funded program to assist people with disabilities who had not acquired their disabilities as a result of serving in the military. RSA developed a historical perspective video, The State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program- The First 100 Years, as part of its 100 years of vocational rehabilitation celebration. "The leaders of the past were faced with many challenges...The VR program has always kept its focus on providing services and support



to helping individuals with disabilities get a job. And now it's our turn, a challenge we all share, to lead by building the foundation for the VR program for the next 100 years", said Mark Schultz, OSERS Acting Assistant Secretary and RSA Commissioner. Visit the Vocational Rehabilitation 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary page to follow along with the RSA's year long VR100 celebration.

Paula Seanez stated a Grants Management session would be held on March 30-31 in Tucson to assist tribal VR programs to better manage their grants and to develop competitive grants in the upcoming competition.

### ***Client Assistance Program***

Dan Martinez inquired whether John Gutierrez noticed a rise in disputes. John Gutierrez stated that he continued to hear about specific issues across the state and offices. Dan Martinez stated that John Gutierrez would attempt to solve all issues at the lowest level. John Gutierrez stated that clients indicated there was a lack of responses from some counselors and some individuals waited long to receive services. Dan Martinez noted that some of those issues could be due to a lack of training of staff. Paula Seanez stated that RSA could learn more from the Customer Satisfaction Surveys, which could help with the training of staff. Dan Martinez agreed and noted that the surveys would need to ask the right questions in order to obtain meaningful data.

### ***AzTAP***

This item was tabled.

### ***Developmental Disabilities***

This item was tabled.

### ***Community Rehabilitation Providers***

Carol Carr stated she was concerned that the population of individuals with significant disabilities that were currently working would be lost in the new system. Ms. Carr stated she was working with the Legislature and developed a White Paper with a psychologist to define the Narrow Band, or the population of individuals with significant disabilities. Carol Carr stated Oregon and Rhode Island had eliminated 14C waivers and center-based employment and she was curious to know what happened to those individuals. Carol Carr stated that information would help to create solutions for the employment of individuals with significant disabilities. Dan Martinez stated his concern that many of the changes were belief driven and individuals with significant disabilities would be affected by those changes. Carol Carr stated the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) put out a comment section that would impact individuals with significant disabilities. She noted that the comment section had been extended, in which over 10,000 individuals responded. Carol Carr stated the importance in looking at the group in entirety and noted the economic impact when an individual with a disability lost his/her job and the family would have to provide that support. Dan Martinez stated the importance of looking at the long-term effect of individuals placed in integrated competitive employment. Dave Cheesman stated the economy was strong currently but



inquired whether individuals with significant disabilities would be able to retain employment if the economy was not strong. Carol Carr stated the community needed empirical data and she was aware of an initiative with Source America, which was collecting data.

### **Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the SRC Full Council will be on May 7, 2020 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm in the Video Conference Room, at 515 N. 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Phoenix, AZ.

### **Announcements**

Ana Nunez stated that Spencer's Place was a coffee shop that was run and operated by individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Ms. Nunez stated the coffee shop was in Surprise, and more information could be found online at <https://spencersplaceaz.com/>

### **Public Comment**

Brian Mickelson inquired whether the SRC meeting dates could be found online for individuals interested in attending meetings. Mr. Mickelson noted that he would also be interested in participating on the next Program Review Committee meeting. Lindsey Powers stated she would ensure the current SRC meeting schedule was posted online and she would forward information regarding the next committee meeting to Mr. Mickelson.

### **Adjournment of Meeting**

The meeting stood adjourned at 3:20 pm.



**Vocational Rehabilitation Scorecard – January 19, 2020 – January 25, 2020**

The total number of individuals in VR program was 12,491

The average number of days from eligibility was 26 days

The eligibility determination compliance within 60 days was 97.1%

The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 86 days

The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days was 85.6%

The total number of individuals in OOS Priority 2 and 3 was 30

The total number of individuals in Priority 2 was 20

The total number of individuals in Priority 3 was 10

The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$12.10

The number of job placements was 30

The number of clients closed with employment was 22

The average days to obtain employment was 767

The average days from referral to application was 37

The average days from job-ready to placement was 107

The average cost of closure with placement was \$27,351.19

The average cost of closure without placement was \$13,090.69